



FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK AUTHORITY

12055 Government Center Parkway, Suite 927
Fairfax, VA 22035-1118



For Immediate Release

Judy Pedersen, PIO
E-mail: parkmail@fairfaxcounty.gov
Press Inquiries: 703-324-8662

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Invasive Plants Program Benefits From Summer Interns

The Fairfax County Park Authority welcomed nine student interns from colleges and universities across the nation who will support the Park Authority's efforts to remove non-native, invasive species this summer. As members of the Invasive Conservation Corps, the students play a vital role in controlling invasive plant infestation, removing stands of non-native plants which threaten local ecosystems and crowd out less aggressive plant life.

These interns represent each corner of the country, combining experience from schools such as the University of North Carolina, Michigan State University and Cornell University. Their expertise in plant identification and proper invasive removal techniques will aid in the protection of more than 23,500 acres of Fairfax County parkland.

The summer project will also provide new invasive plant data and research materials which can be included in future publications including invasive species flashcards and mapping surveys of removed species. These materials will provide both the Park Authority and the public with key data to track the non-native invasive plant removal efforts.

The Park Authority has recently focused much effort on the removal of non-native invasive plants. The volunteer-based Invasive Management Area project began in 2006 with a focus on community support and momentum to actively remove and control non-native, invasive plant and animal species. After habitat loss, non-native, invasive species are the second most serious threat to the quality of natural areas and their ability to support wildlife. The initiative encourages community involvement and public education.

More information on IMA and the Invasive Conservation Corps is available at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/resources/MIA>. Inquiries regarding this new internship opportunity may be directed to Meghan Fellows, Park Authority Naturalist at 703-324-8586.

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703-324-8700 • TTY: 703-803-3354 • ONLINE: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks • E-MAIL: parkmail@fairfaxcounty.gov



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